



ANNUAL REVIEW 2023/24

SEA
CADETS



Welcome from HRH, The Princess Royal

As Admiral of the Sea Cadet Corps, I congratulate the volunteers and employees who have continued to work so hard, despite funding challenges, to ensure our cadets continued to benefit from a wealth of fulfilling opportunities and experiences in 2023/24. While these challenges meant that some activities were temporarily curtailed, I have been heartened by the determination to follow our Future Ready Strategy's plan for long-term growth. Indeed, our offer to cadets was improved where possible, including the introduction of yachting expeditions to our Duke of Edinburgh's Award programme, leading to a record 58 Gold Awards.

I have been pleased to see an increase in our participation in community events, which not only develops cadets' sense of citizenship, but inspires others to join us. Sea Cadets' central role in community life was never clearer than during the celebrations for the Coronation of King Charles III, when our presence brought ceremony and distinction to so many events across the United Kingdom. Cadets' ability to elevate such occasions has been greatly enhanced by our engagement with the Royal Navy, another area of growth, which cadets themselves identified as a priority. Our increasing Cadet Voice programme has also allowed cadets to have greater influence over our approach to the environment, wellbeing and inclusion; all of which helps our charity to stay relevant and responsive to the needs of the young people we serve.

Judging by the excellent morale and quality of performances I witnessed at the National Drill and Piping Competition in April 2024, Sea Cadets is well placed to succeed in the coming year. The event highlighted the unique strengths of our charity, with dedicated volunteers helping cadets to achieve their potential through hard work and preparation, guided by support from the Royal Navy. Above all, our cadet drill teams exemplified the teamwork and constructive collaboration I have seen across the charity this year.

I am sure that if every individual continues to play their own crucial part, while supporting those around them, we can look forward to another year of progress and achievement.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be 'Anne', written in a cursive style.

HRH, The Princess Royal
Admiral of the Sea Cadet Corps



Welcome from the Chair and CEO

A successful first year of our Future Ready Strategy, from its launch in April 2023, saw us make good progress in equipping our charity to meet the increasing demand for our services. Despite major challenges posed by sustained inflation and a reduction in our funding, we still achieved our ambitions to increase cadet and volunteer numbers, while creating new sections and detachments which will support sustainable future growth.

An organisation-wide consultation saw volunteers and employees pull together in response to incredibly difficult financial conditions. By listening to the positive solutions they identified, we've succeeded in refining our offer without unduly compromising the consistency or quality of the Sea Cadets Experience. And by lightening the load on our people, we've been able to maintain a laser focus on ensuring we can meet cadets' insatiable appetite for all that Sea Cadets offers.

While the financial restrictions we faced necessitated cuts to some activities in 2023/24, the longer-term changes we implemented have given us a solid platform for 2024/25 – as we seek to expand the range of opportunities available to cadets, while continuing to prioritise safety and increased engagement with the Royal Navy. Above all, 2023/24 has been a reminder that we must look to diversify our sources of funding and develop more partnerships. This is why we are prioritising ongoing work to develop corporate

sponsorship opportunities and increase membership subscriptions, supported by the launch of a new Friends of Sea Cadets scheme to broaden our supporter base and build relationships with alumni and others who share our passion for launching young people for life.

We'll also be launching two high-profile fundraising appeals – to encourage more people and organisations to get involved with our work by helping to finance new adventure training centres and the refurbishment of our flagship, TS Royalist. And we remain hugely grateful to the generous donors who help to fund our increasingly vital offshore bursaries – which represented 70% of our total bursary support in 2023/24, as cadets' families really began to feel the impact of the cost-of-living crisis. With that proportion set to remain high in 2024/25, we'd love to hear from potential funders at fundraising@ms-sc.org – because Sea Cadets believes no young person should have to miss out due to personal financial circumstances.

Having overcome the severe headwinds of 2023/24, we remain more determined than ever to maximise our resources in developing as many young people as possible. Inspired by the life-changing impact we continue to have, and with our Future Ready Strategy in place and providing us with a clear course to steer, the whole charity is ready to drive through any choppy waters and deliver another year of challenge and nautical adventure for our cadets.

Jeremy Penn
Chair, MSSC

Martin Coles
CEO, MSSC



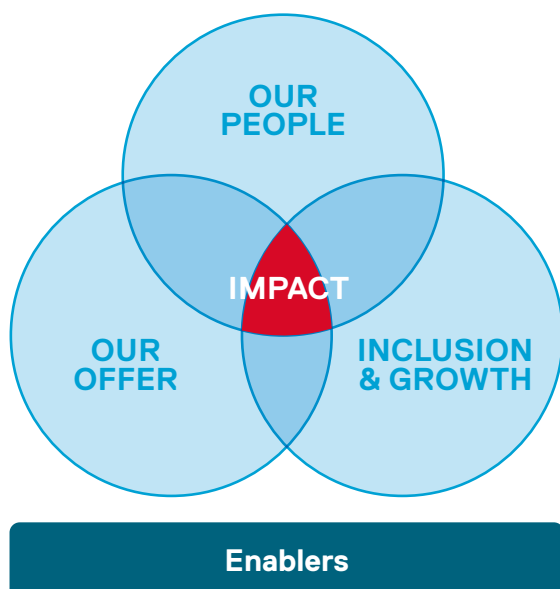
Our Future Ready Strategy

In April 2023, to a packed audience at the House of Lords, our cadets launched our charity's new Future Ready Strategy. Developed with our cadets, volunteers and employees this charts a clear course for Sea Cadets for the five years to 2028. The cadets outlined in their own words how the strategy is about meeting the growing demand for what Sea Cadets offers their generation, while equipping them to thrive in a world of increasingly rapid change.

This means providing a unique mix of non-formal education, challenge and adventure that develops confidence and resilience; builds teamwork and leadership skills; and instills clear values – all within an inclusive learning environment, where safety and safeguarding remain paramount.

The cadets explained how they had been central to design of the Future Ready Strategy and how it seeks to create the conditions where we are:

- **Developing an urgency for growth and delivering on it**
- **Fully embracing flexible volunteering**
- **Becoming fully inclusive**
- **Creating a youth-centred approach**
- **Driving cadet voice**
- **Ensuring a positive and supportive employee experience**



These objectives are guided by our aspirations under three key themes:

ENHANCING OUR OFFER TO CADETS

- Expand our range of training activities
- Reflect more of today's Royal Navy
- Develop support for mental health and emotional wellbeing
- Empower young people to shape their own experience

EQUIPPING OUR PEOPLE TO SUPPORT OUR BENEFICIARIES

- Implement leadership and management training
- Deliver skills for volunteers to provide youth-centered activities
- Explore opportunities for flexible volunteering

EMBRACING INCLUSION AND GROWTH

- Deliver Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) training and support for volunteers, employees and cadets
- Ensure we reflect the places we serve
- Reach out to under-represented communities
- Open new sections and units
- Grow by 2,500 cadets by 2028



What we achieved in 2023/24

The first year of our Future Ready Strategy saw us make good progress in providing our charity with a platform for sustainable growth. Despite facing considerable financial challenges, the hard work of our volunteers and employees meant we delivered much of what we hoped to achieve in 2023/24. We set out nine key outcomes to guide delivery, backed by detailed plans to achieve them. Take a look at what we delivered:

OUR OFFER TO CADETS:

Ensure more engaging training and activities

Improvements to our Sea Cadets Portal increased the provision of online learning support and resources – including new sessions on positive mental health and emotional wellbeing, as well as **19** new Cadet Training Programme modules.



Offer more Royal Navy experiences

We increased our engagement with the Royal Navy by holding **14** District Navy Experience weeks at HMS Raleigh and providing careers advice for **873** cadets (up from 659 in 2022/23). In total, **35%** of cadets had the opportunity to meet serving members of the Royal Navy – well above our 20% target.



Further develop Cadet Voice

Many more units held regular cadet forums during the year, with a new monitoring process developed to accurately track this growth in future years. We also delivered **five** national projects using cadet co-production approaches, ahead of our target of two.



OUR PEOPLE:

Further develop volunteer training

2023/24 saw two new leadership courses give our volunteers the skills to improve their unit management and unlock the full potential of their cadets. We also developed 'working with young people' training for uniformed volunteers and instructors, delivering foundation courses in **90%** of units.



Promote development opportunities for our employees

We provided management and leadership training to develop our National Support Centre employees, further enhancing the skills needed to develop effective teams and promote a positive working culture.





INCLUSION & GROWTH:

Continue to grow and begin to address waiting lists

Cadet numbers reached **14,243**, achieving our aim of a net growth of **500**. To meet demand, support from the DCMS Uniformed Youth Investment Fund helped us open **24** new sections and **14** new junior sections. Total volunteer numbers also grew, to **8,903**, after **1,811** people joined our units around the UK – an increase of almost **10%** on our 2022/23 recruitment.



Become more inclusive

Backed by a comprehensive accessibility audit of our buildings and facilities, we launched an organisation-wide Disability Position Statement and new guidelines to help disabled young people take part in our activities. We also made sure **every employee** received Equity, Diversity and Inclusion training, with an online EDI course developed for volunteers.



ENABLERS:

Improve our environmental approach

Our cadet-led campaign provided carbon calculator tools to help units and facilities measure and reduce their carbon footprints – supported by advice shared via a regular environmental newsletter edited by cadets. Our Sea Hives project saw the monitoring of marine life begin in two locations, with a third hive created by junior cadets at Portland Marina.



Better systems and facilities to support delivery

We opened Middlehill adventure training hub in Sussex, completed work on our new Midlands Boat Station and identified over **150** suitable venues for new air rifle centres, drill hubs and regional shooting hubs. We also updated our Unit Review and Royal Naval Parade processes to ensure units are fairly assessed and rewarded for their achievements.



Refining our offer

ADDRESSING OUR FUNDING SHORTFALL

Delivery of the first year of our Future Ready Strategy occurred within an exceptionally testing environment as we battled the harsh economic headwinds of high inflation. And with the Ministry of Defence facing the same challenges, an unexpected re-set of our grant-in-aid from the Royal Navy (which constitutes almost half of Sea Cadets' funding) for the financial year 2023/24 compounded our financial burden. To preserve as many cadet activities as possible, we made the difficult decision to make a number of temporary limitations to ensure we stayed within our financial means for the year. This included:

- Cancelling the offshore voyages of our power vessel TS John Jerwood for 2023, from June
- Halting all international exchange trips
- Suspending supply of new No1 uniforms for the financial year
- Limiting funds for unit premises grants
- Capping volunteer allowances and employee salaries

With ongoing inflation continuing to have a major impact on our costs, and in order to lift some of the temporary restrictions for 2024/25, we launched our 'Refining our Offer' initiative in November 2023 to address the anticipated £1.94m shortfall. This involved exploring options for cutting our organisational and delivery costs and implementing efficiencies in the way we deliver the Sea Cadets Experience. To help find solutions to these challenges, every volunteer and employee was invited to contribute through consultation workshops, and over 1,000 took that opportunity.

The difficult choices we agreed on together necessitated a strategic restructuring of our central teams, with a reduction in 10.45 full time equivalent roles resulting in six redundancies and impacting on a further 40 roles across all departments. We also agreed to set an aggressive fundraising target of £3.1m for 2024/25 (up from £2.2m in 23/24), to support the ambitions of our Future Ready Strategy (p5) as well as to drive increased income generation across the charity. Overall, the process helped us arrive at an affordable budget for 2024/25 – closing the funding gap while ensuring our continued progress towards our long-term aims.



LIGHTENING THE LOAD ON VOLUNTEERS

The consultation identified the need to slow the pace of delivery of a revised Sea Cadets Experience and approved activities list, to give our amazing volunteers more capacity to support cadets' training and development. This was achieved by incorporating three key skills (navigation, meteorology and piping) into unit training; simplifying cadet promotion criteria; streamlining our national competitions calendar; and delivering more training at district or unit level – all freeing up volunteers' time to focus on providing activities for cadets.

We hope that the delivery of activities will now be much more sustainable and enjoyable for volunteers, who are also benefitting from other time-saving innovations introduced in 2023/24 – including the introduction of automated online booking for cadet courses, online tools to track cadets' progress and an increase in the virtual and online delivery of volunteer training.

The Sea Cadets Experience



MAINTAINING CONSISTENCY AND QUALITY

Despite the challenges, we were able to maintain a huge range of cadet activities during 2023/24. While our total boating hours (429,769), qualifications awarded (45,219) and beyond-unit training days (63,611) were all down on 2022/23, they remain an impressive achievement in view of the restrictions we faced. Thanks to the dedication of our volunteers, the average cadet enjoyed 31.3 hours on the water, experienced 4.1 days at specialist training locations and achieved 3.4 new awards or qualifications.

Our improvements to the BTEC enrolment process helped to increase Level 1 registrations for these vocational qualifications by 29% in 2023/24, with the number of Level 1 and Level 2 completions increasing by 23% to 1,030. The number of cadets gaining a Duke of Edinburgh's Award also increased to 464 – including a record 58 golds, thanks to 24 cadets being able to complete their expeditions on our yachts for the first time. Another first saw us enter all ten of our keelboats in the RS21 National Championships, allowing 30 cadets to experience top-level offshore racing thanks to a huge logistical effort from 18 volunteers and employees.

RESTORING OUR OFFSHORE FLEET

Due to the reduction of our offshore fleet from five to four vessels for the second half of the 2023 sailing season, the number of cadets able to join an offshore voyage in 2023/24 fell by 16% on the previous year. Thanks to our Offshore Team, the 1,381 cadets who were able to set sail enjoyed the usual mix of life-changing voyages – exploring the UK coastline; visiting the Channel Islands, France and Holland; and taking part in Tall Ships races and festivals with our flagship TS Royalist.

Because an offshore voyage is so often the pinnacle of a young person's time with us, we prioritised the return of our full offshore fleet and programme in 2024. With TS Royalist now reaching its tenth year in operation, having completed over 50,000 miles of sailing, the year saw us begin preparation work for its 10-year refit commencing for winter 2024.

Thanks to the amazing support of The Uren Foundation and The Naval Club we have already secured £379k to enable us to ready the ship for the necessary regulatory surveys. It has also given us the confidence to plan to fully refurbish TS Royalist over the next two winters (alongside the refit). This will ensure we upgrade the vessel to the safest modern standards and further extend its lifespan – to benefit the next generation of cadets and preserve one of the few remaining square-rigged training ships in the UK.

To refit and refurbish the ship, we need to raise around half a million pounds. We are therefore keen to work with other partners who could support our fundraising appeal at tsroyalist.org – and play a part in securing the long-term future of this iconic tall ship.



Staying safe

SAFER ACTIVITY

Staying safe always comes first. We closely followed the Coroner's Inquest into the tragic 2018 death of a 16-year-old Explorer Scout during a hill walking activity – to ensure that Sea Cadets could make use of any relevant learnings to improve our own delivery of activities.

We assessed our procedures in light of the issues raised in the Coroner's latest report published in early 2024. We developed a new 10-point safety checklist for use in planning activities and ensured all our volunteers refreshed their knowledge of our existing systems and processes, including an updated risk assessment tool. Further work is ongoing for 2024/25 to strengthen our mandatory safety training programme, introduce a safety pocket guide and further develop our ongoing auditing and checking.

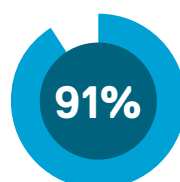
SAFEGUARDING

As part of our constant efforts to prioritise safeguarding, we concluded an external independent review of our safeguarding procedures and processes, undertaken by Barnardo's. This regular comprehensive audit confirmed our strong culture of safeguarding and our continued progress, as well as our appetite for ongoing improvement. To ensure continual enhancement, we have implemented a safeguarding development plan to be regularly monitored by our Senior Management Team and Trustees.

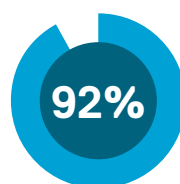
Other progress on this vital issue included the issuing of an updated safeguarding pocket guide to all cadets and volunteers, incorporating their suggestions. We were also proud to learn that our mandatory 'Safeguarding at Sea Cadets' course had been shortlisted for the not-for-profit 'People Development Programme of the Year' by The Learning Awards 2024.

CADET AND PARENTAL PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY AND SAFEGUARDING

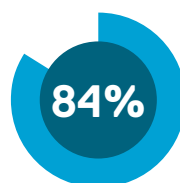
Our annual Impact Report surveys confirm that cadets' and parents' perceptions of safety and safeguarding at Sea Cadets have remained consistently positive. While there is still room for improvement in this feedback – which we are determined to achieve – our 2023/24 survey recorded a high level of confidence in our systems and processes:



91% of cadets and parents/carers agree that Sea Cadets is a safe environment.



92% of cadets are confident they would know who to go to if a young person in Sea Cadets needed safeguarding help.



84% of parents/carers were highly confident that any issues they raised with the Safeguarding Team would be dealt with appropriately.



7.9 / 10 the average level of trust cadets expressed in Sea Cadets adults at their units – meaningfully higher than their trust in teachers (6.2).





Working with the Royal Navy

Sea Cadets benefits immensely from the long-standing support of the Royal Navy through the grant-in-aid funding, secondments of personnel and extensive use of facilities and equipment. Our cadets were particularly grateful for the generosity of all those serving personnel who hosted an incredible range of hands-on visits to ships and training establishments during the year – from the investiture of our First Sea Lord's Cadets on board HMS Victory to the participation of our Junior Leaders Field Gun Competition team at HMS Collingwood.

REPRESENTING THE ROYAL NAVY ACROSS THE UK

We continued to represent the Senior Service in almost 400 towns and cities across the UK – everywhere the Royal Navy is not. By contributing **42,200 cadet days** to local events and parades in 2023/24 we provided a visible community presence for the Royal Navy, reaching a further **569 million people** through our positive press coverage.

Armed Forces Day Parades across the UK

200 cadets and volunteers
parading at Armed Forces
Day in Falmouth



Battle of the Atlantic 80 Commemorations

Petty Officer Cadet
Callum of Stafford &
Rugeley Unit carrying the
BoA80 Standard during
the Drumhead Service
in Liverpool



Trafalgar Day Parades across the UK

Over 400 cadets taking part in the National Trafalgar Day Parade in London



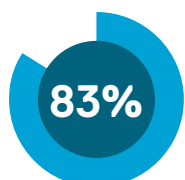
DEMONSTRATING VALUE TO THE ROYAL NAVY

We continue to exceed both measured performance indicators set out in our Memorandum of Understanding with the Royal Navy: delivering 682 Career Awareness Briefings to Volunteers (against stretch target of 240), and 250 school engagement visits (against a stretch target of 36). Meanwhile, our cost-effectiveness was confirmed by a May 2023 review of MOD-sponsored cadet forces, which showed Sea Cadets as the community cadet force providing by far the best value for the public purse.¹

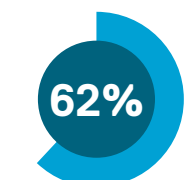
For cadets, the importance and relevance of our partnership with the Royal Navy was clearly demonstrated in our 2023/24 Impact Report:



the average level of trust cadets expressed in the Royal Navy – comparable with their trust in Sea Cadets volunteers (7.9).



of cadets agreed that the customs and traditions of the Royal Navy are an important part of the appeal of Sea Cadets.



felt that Sea Cadets had made them more likely to join the Royal Navy.

The Royal Navy's support of our careers fair at the cadet conference in February 2024 was well received by all of the cadets who attended, enabling them to find out about the career opportunities the Royal Navy has to offer.

During the year, we sought to play our part in an Independent Review of Cadets, commissioned by the Second Sea Lord to guide the way ahead for the next 25 years. The Review was a great opportunity to demonstrate the value and impact of Sea Cadets, and we stand ready to work ever more closely with the Royal Navy to support the further development of its cadet forces in the coming years.

INVESTING WITH THE ROYAL NAVY

As we look to continually strengthen our partnership with the Royal Navy in 2024/25, we will benefit from its major investment in our joint project to create safe and secure drill and rifle shooting hub facilities across Sea Cadets. We are also grateful for the Royal Navy's temporary accommodation grant during 2023/24, which helped to overcome our loss of 12,000 overnight stays per year as a result of the withdrawal of HMS Bristol. We now look forward to working together to identify alternative accommodation arrangements for future years – hopefully including the cherished experience of staying on a Royal Navy ship.

We remain eager to explore further opportunities for closer working, leveraging what Sea Cadets has to offer and maximising the opportunities for cadets to be inspired as they play their part within the Royal Navy family.

1. Management Accountancy Services for the Army, known as MAS(A), undertook a review of the cost of MOD Sponsored Cadet Forces for the financial year 2021/22, published 27 May 2023.

Our impact

The welcoming environment of the Sea Cadets family allows young people to thrive as they gain new friends, role models and support networks. Whether on the water or inland, the huge range of training and non-formal education we offer is designed to help our cadets progress through the ranks and gain skills and qualifications. In the process, they develop self-confidence and resilience, learn how to work as part of a team, and discover their own unique passions – all of which improves their life chances and wellbeing, and helps them make a positive difference to the wider world.

Our Sea Cadets Experience delivers a journey of growth and development for our young people, with the combination of learning experiences, mentoring and camaraderie having an immediate impact. Indeed, our analysis has found that the activities we provide through Sea Cadets develop key life skills within just six months.

OUR 2023/24 IMPACT SURVEY

ENHANCING LIFE SKILLS, CONFIDENCE AND WELLBEING

Sea Cadets has improved:

- My ability to work with others in a team – **87% of cadets surveyed agreed**
- How well I communicate with others **81%**
- My ability to plan for the future **63%**
- My resilience in new situations **77%**
- My physical health **75%**

Sea Cadets:

- Makes me feel empowered **73%**
- Has made me resilient and prepared for tough times **61%**
- Is a supportive environment **88%**
- Helps to stop me getting in trouble at school, or with the police **48%**

ACHIEVING PERSONAL GROWTH THROUGH THE SEA CADETS VALUES



- Sea Cadets has made me better at listening to the views of others **71%**
- Sea Cadets has made me more likely to help other people **80%**



- Sea Cadets has increased my motivation to take part in things **83%**
- Sea Cadets has improved my ability to make decisions and see them through **69%**



- I feel connected to Sea Cadets **83%**
- Sea Cadets has increased my involvement with my local community **65%**



- Sea Cadets has made me feel that other people can count on me **70%**
- Sea Cadets has helped me to tell the truth, even when it is hard **55%**



- Sea Cadets has increased my willingness to work hard **77%**
- Sea Cadets helps me to do better at school or in other education **58%**



- Sea Cadets has helped me to stand up for things I believe are right **67%**
- Sea Cadets has reduced my involvement in risky or anti-social behaviour **43%**

HOW SEA CADETS CHANGED ME

“

I've been on offshore voyages, done lots of courses from windsurfing to catering, and become a paddle instructor. I play the trumpet in the Sea Cadets Massed Band, taking part in big national parades such as Trafalgar Day. I was born with visual impairment, but everyone at Sea Cadets has been really supportive of me and made sure that I'm able to fully participate in all the activities it offers. Being part of Sea Cadets has definitely changed my life and helped me with everything from self-confidence to leadership skills.”

Cadet Eleanor, Southampton Unit



“

Joining Sea Cadets has been a transformative experience for me. It has instilled in me a strong sense of discipline, responsibility and teamwork – valuable skills which I will use for the rest of my life. I've developed confidence and resilience through leadership opportunities and hands-on training, while the friendships I've built have taught me the value of supporting and relying on others. Being a cadet has not only shaped my character, but also given me a clearer direction for my future. If I had to summarise Sea Cadets in two words it would be 'life-changing,' because it really does shape your life.”

Cadet Megan, Newton-le-Willows Unit



“

Being part of the National Cadet Voice Team, I feel like I have learnt about leadership, teamwork and much more. It has helped me understand what others might be going through and how to help them – just to be there for them even if I can't help directly, and honestly, I love every second of it! Cadets should have a voice because in the end it's our organisation – if we have a voice we can tailor it to our specification, our needs and help everyone have a better experience.”

Marine Cadet Kwame, Wolverhampton Unit



“

I have been with my unit since October 2021 and have had the chance to gain new experiences I would not have had through my school journey. I have also taken part in competitions up to national level and earned many qualifications – including first aid, kayaking and mechanical engineering. I have successfully passed three advancement boards, which has allowed me to develop my leadership and teamwork skills. The unit and wider Sea Cadets family have been welcoming of my faith, and I have felt part of the community at events I have attended. I adore going on camps with the Royal Marines Cadets as it is always fun and you meet new people.”

Cadet Gurtej, Sutton Coldfield Unit



Cadets leading the way

CADET VOICE

Once again, our Cadet Voice programme had a major influence on the organisation in 2023/24. Cadets (aged 13 to 17) on our National Cadet Voice Team are now involved in the interview process for all senior positions across the charity. We have also appointed two Cadet Trustee Committee Members – building on the success of the two young trustees (both former cadets) already in post, and bringing cadets' passion, energy and ideas into our national charity's decision making.

The year also saw many more units holding forums to allow cadets to have a say on the areas they would like to change or improve. These ideas were then presented by cadets to district and area-level meetings, with the most popular themes taken forward nationally. Designed and delivered by cadets, our largest ever Cadet Conference saw almost 300 young people come together to shape the future of their organisation in February 2024. Based on cadets' own priorities, workshops were designed to help them consider future careers with maritime professionals and Royal Navy personnel; discuss the essential skills and characteristics needed by volunteers; and identify ways to improve collaboration between Sea Cadets and Royal Marines Cadets.

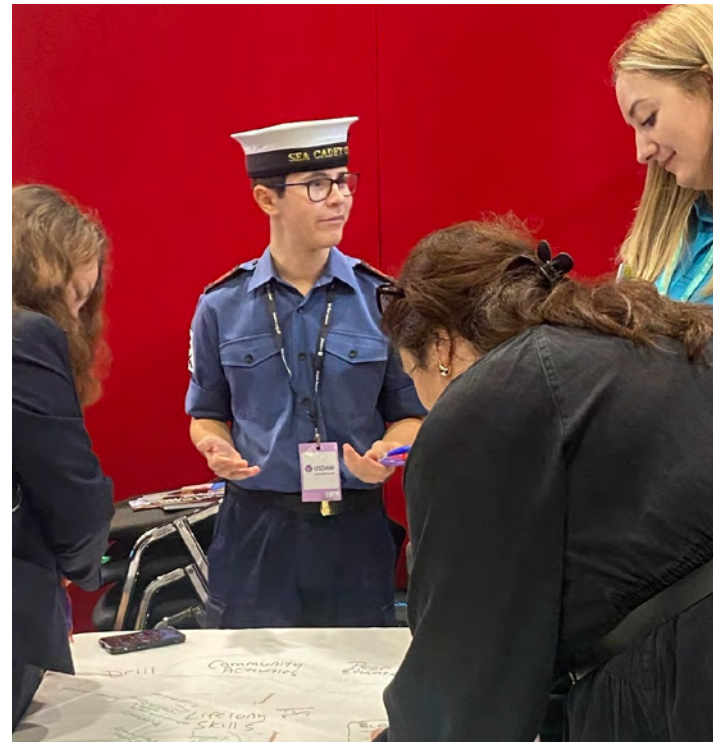
ENVIRONMENTAL CAMPAIGNERS

Because Cadet Voice has continued to put the environment at the forefront of our strategic thinking, Cadet Conference also featured a workshop on the 'Water Quality Heroes' campaign we launched with the University of Birmingham in early 2024. Cadets explored the harmful impact of algae, nitrates and microplastics on wildlife and learned how to test the water quality of their local boating environments, from rivers to reservoirs. This knowledge was then put into practice as cadets worked with our boat station teams to conduct regular water quality testing – analysing the results in the hope of providing data that could assist government plans to improve water quality monitoring across the UK.

With cadets also expressing a desire to contribute more to their local communities, we created a new range of 'community activity' training modules in 2023/24 – with two of these directly inspired by cadets' leadership on the environment. Our 'Bee Bombs' activity was based on our Whitehaven Unit's cadet-led project to send out wildflower seed bombs to youth groups across the UK – enough to turn 15,000 square feet of unused



ground into attractive, pollinator-friendly habitats. Meanwhile, our 'Beach Litter Picking' session followed a Redcar Unit cadet's idea to turn their beach clean into a community engagement and art project; Ordinary Cadet Amy had enlisted Yorkshire Seal Group to deliver a workshop on tackling marine litter, contacted South Gare Litter Pickers for litter picking equipment, and encouraged her fellow cadets to create beach art using natural items they found.



AMBASSADORS FOR SEA CADETS

Our Cadet Voice representatives have also thrived in representing Sea Cadets on a national and even global stage during the year.

- Eight cadets joined our CEO Martin Coles CBE to explain the Sea Cadets Experience to delegates at both the Conservative and Labour Party Conferences. Their workshop findings even helped us build a cross-party consensus on the need for more resources to unlock the benefits of non-formal education for young people and their communities.

- Two First Sea Lord's Cadets represented the UK in November's G20 international quiz, hosted by the Indian Navy in New Delhi. Petty Officer Cadets Maisie (Fishguard Unit) and Joseph (Camberley Unit) were competing against students and cadets from the world's largest 20 economies and nine guest countries. The trip also helped to raise the global profile of Sea Cadets, with Maisie and Joseph spending time with the Indian National Cadet Corps and meeting India's Vice President, Jagdeep Dhankhar, and Chief of the Indian Naval Staff, Admiral Hari Kumar.



Valuing our volunteers

CELEBRATING ACHIEVEMENT

We were delighted to celebrate our volunteers' achievements with the return of our National Awards in January 2024, following a four-year absence due to pandemic disruption.

- Twickenham Sea Cadets won the Canada Trophy for the most efficient unit of 2023 – a testament to the efforts of their Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Commander Martyn Mayger RN (below left), a former sea cadet who revived a unit on the brink of closure, alongside a demanding Royal Navy career.
- Barrow Sea Cadets won the TS Indefatigable Cup for the most improved unit. Their volunteers delivered over 85 boating hours per cadet and more than 1,000 cadet training days in 2023.
- Young adult volunteer Lieutenant (SCC) Thomas Singleton-Kelly RMR (parading opposite) was awarded the McCarroll Trophy in recognition of his outstanding service to Royal Marines Cadets.



NATIONAL RECOGNITION

We were proud to acknowledge the achievement of Maryport & Solway Unit (below right) in becoming Sea Cadets' first recipient of a King's Award for Voluntary Service (the group equivalent of an MBE), in recognition of their volunteers' outstanding impact on local young people. Just 29 UK youth groups (and only one other uniformed cadet force group) received this honour in 2023, and it was a fitting reward for volunteers' efforts throughout the year – including getting their cadets to the National Combined Regatta in London despite a last-minute train strike, allowing their boat handling team to win gold medals for the second year running.

We were also pleased to learn that three of our volunteers had been named among just 500 Coronation Champions. These special awards were created to recognise the nation's most extraordinary volunteers nominated by the public:

- Sub Lieutenant (SCC) Marlene Rhodes RNR, Commanding Officer of Rickmansworth & Watford Unit
- Ruth Verner, the chair of Ballymena Unit
- Jeremy Williams, the chair of Rhondda Unit



VOLUNTEER STORIES

“

I was dropping my daughter off at Sea Cadets every week and she thought I'd be a really good volunteer. During The King's Big Help Out last May, I reached out to the unit and said 'are there any opportunities?' I took up the uniformed volunteer option, even though I'd had no military career and I was never in cadets. I'd never had any volunteering experience in anything else, but everything you need, Sea Cadets will give to you. Part of my training is about engaging with the cadets and making their journey fun, which I've found really useful for my day job at a local college as well. With Sea Cadets you're never just one person – you're part of a unit, with people with knowledge and skills who will happily help you out. That's what's been lovely about volunteering at TS Kingfisher.”

**Petty Officer (SCC) Natalie Legg, Redditch & Bromsgrove
Sea Cadets volunteer**



“

I joined the Corps in 1977 as a cadet, reached Petty Officer Cadet and became a volunteer in 1982. Now, as a District Warrant Officer I mentor and advise senior rates across the District; I enjoy the challenges and no two days are the same. Volunteering with Sea Cadets is a fantastic opportunity – you get as much out of it as you put in, and the satisfaction you get out of it grows and grows. The pride you feel taking a team of young people all the way to their first competition or event, and seeing them develop, is unmatched. I still look forward to seeing the volunteers and cadets across our district grow and reach their potential, supporting them to cross that line and get that Sea Cadets Experience.”

Warrant Officer 1 (SCC) Orel Dawes RNR, Avon District volunteer



Community engagement

THE CORONATION OF HIS MAJESTY KING CHARLES III

With the eyes of the world on London on 6 May 2023, we were proud to have a strong Sea Cadets presence at the national Coronation events which united the country in celebration. While Brentwood Unit volunteer Petty Officer (SCC) Apple-Jane Hayward BEM represented Sea Cadets inside Westminster Abbey, Able Cadet Sara of Southampton Unit and Cadet Corporal James of Guildford Royal Marines Cadets Detachment proudly bore our Standards in Parliament Square. Thirty more of our senior cadets had the honour of being invited to view the Coronation Parade from a special Cadet Forces spectator area at Admiralty Arch.

Around the rest of the UK, Sea Cadets units played a major part in community events to celebrate the Coronation – including leading Coronation Parades in Greenwich and Glasgow and taking part in Coronation Services in Chichester and St David's Cathedrals. Cadets from London Area represented our charity at a special Coronation Reception at the Baitul Futuh Mosque, where over 700 representatives of community, faith, youth and uniformed organisations gathered to celebrate King Charles III. Meanwhile, 25 Market Harborough Unit cadets held a Coronation Flotilla of kayaks and paddleboards along a six-mile stretch of the Grand Union Canal. Junior Cadet Max perfectly summed up the spirit of our Coronation activities: "It was my first time doing paddlesports and I loved every minute of it. Six miles was very hard work but so is being The King!"



LAUNCHING 'THE BIG HELP OUT'

The launch of The Big Help Out initiative to promote volunteering – the Royal Family's chosen theme for the special Coronation Bank Holiday – provided the perfect opportunity to showcase the range of volunteer roles we offer at Sea Cadets. We were honoured to help launch the campaign with over 300 cadets and volunteers piping the 'Call the Hands' on the lawns of the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich. Not only was this a unique way to call on the nation to try volunteering, but it was verified as the biggest-ever ship's whistle lesson by officials from the Guinness Book of World Records!

As part of a Sea Cadets' national challenge, the call was simultaneously piped by hundreds more cadets at dozens of locations around the UK at 4.30pm precisely – including at The King's winter residence of Sandringham House, where our Suffolk & Norfolk District had been invited to pipe, and by our Bristol Unit at Brunel's iconic SS Great Britain. Southampton, Felixstowe and Stafford & Rugeley Units were among those who used The Big Help Out to draw in large numbers of volunteers to spruce up their premises and equipment, while Workington, Stonehaven, Fraserburgh and Keighley Units worked with local people to clean up their communities. Dozens of other units from Croydon to Worcester opened their doors to host open days and demonstration events to attract potential volunteers, with all the events raising our profile in communities and contributing to a strong year of volunteer recruitment.



REACHING MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES

Throughout August 2023, our 'On The Water' outreach programme gave a first taste of boating and water sports to 779 marginalised children in Birmingham and London through 4,136 sessions. 64 accredited qualifications were awarded and 84% of parents and carers said the activities had made their young person more confident. We engaged significantly more participants from areas of relative economic disadvantage than in 2022 (76%, up from 67%), with 29% of those taking part receiving free school meals compared to 14% in 2022. It was also very positive that we were able to welcome a higher proportion of young people with disabilities (10%, up from 7%), and that 39% of participants expressed an interest in joining Sea Cadets.

“

It was really fun, it's good exercise, it boosts your confidence and you make new friends. The instructors are really kind and look after you. They made me feel safe.”

Opal, 10, On The Water participant



HONOURING THE FALLEN

Once again, our cadets, volunteers and parents helped local communities to remember those who fought for our freedom. Blackburn Unit were among the busiest – holding five separate collections for the Royal British Legion's Poppy Appeal, attending three civic Remembrance events, and even promoting the importance of Remembrance on BBC Radio Lancashire. Peterborough Sea Cadets also had a special Remembrance season, culminating in their attendance at the national Remembrance Service at the Cenotaph in London (right). Thanks to funding from the Western Front Association and Lions Clubs International, the unit was also able to visit the battlefields of Ypres and the Menin Gate memorial, which gave cadets a powerful insight into the sacrifice of our armed forces during the First World War. The unit also received lots of positive media coverage for their stunning poppy cascade display, which helped them raise almost £400 for the Royal British Legion.



Looking forward: our goals for 2024/25

Building on the achievements of the past year, we've identified strategic goals for 2024/25. These goals will help us to create the conditions necessary to drive the core principles of our Future Ready Strategy, in a year which will be a crucial step on the journey to making our organisation fully inclusive, ready for growth, and centred around the needs of our cadets, volunteers and employees.

OUR OFFER

Refined Sea Cadets Experience fully implemented:

- Volunteers empowered to deliver more district level training
- Navigation, meteorology and piping embedded in the cadet training programme
- The new competition programme embedded
- 80 sessions updated or added to Programmes Online
- Welfare training for support of camps progressed

Increased cadet voice:

- 50%+ of units holding regular cadet forums

Cadet Royal Navy engagement increased:

- 20% of cadets offered the opportunity to meet the Royal Navy
- Two specialisations/proficiencies updated to reflect today's Royal Navy

Maritime career opportunities increased for cadets:

- Royal Navy careers link strengthened, with career awareness sessions for cadets
- At least two careers fairs delivered



OUR PEOPLE

Volunteers and employees further supported:

- Additional safety, leadership and Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) training
- Digital volunteer onboarding launched and employee induction improved
- National framework for volunteer mentoring commenced
- Flexible volunteering progressed

INCLUSION & GROWTH

Providing Sea Cadets to even more young people:

- 500 more cadets
- 30 new sections/units opened

Our approach to EDI progressed:

- Policies and guidance further developed
- Access/inclusivity guidance for units developed

ENABLERS

Digital and Facilities improvements:

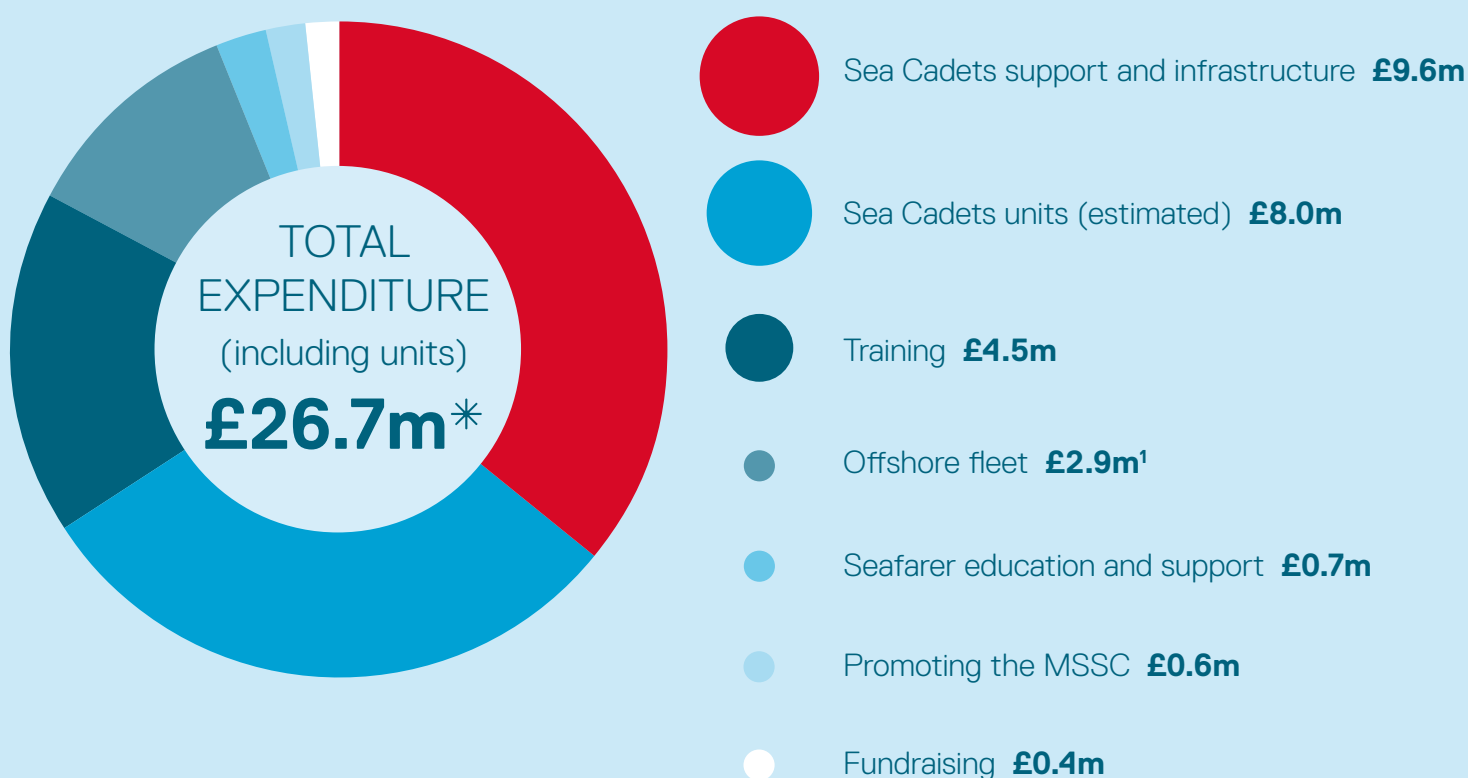
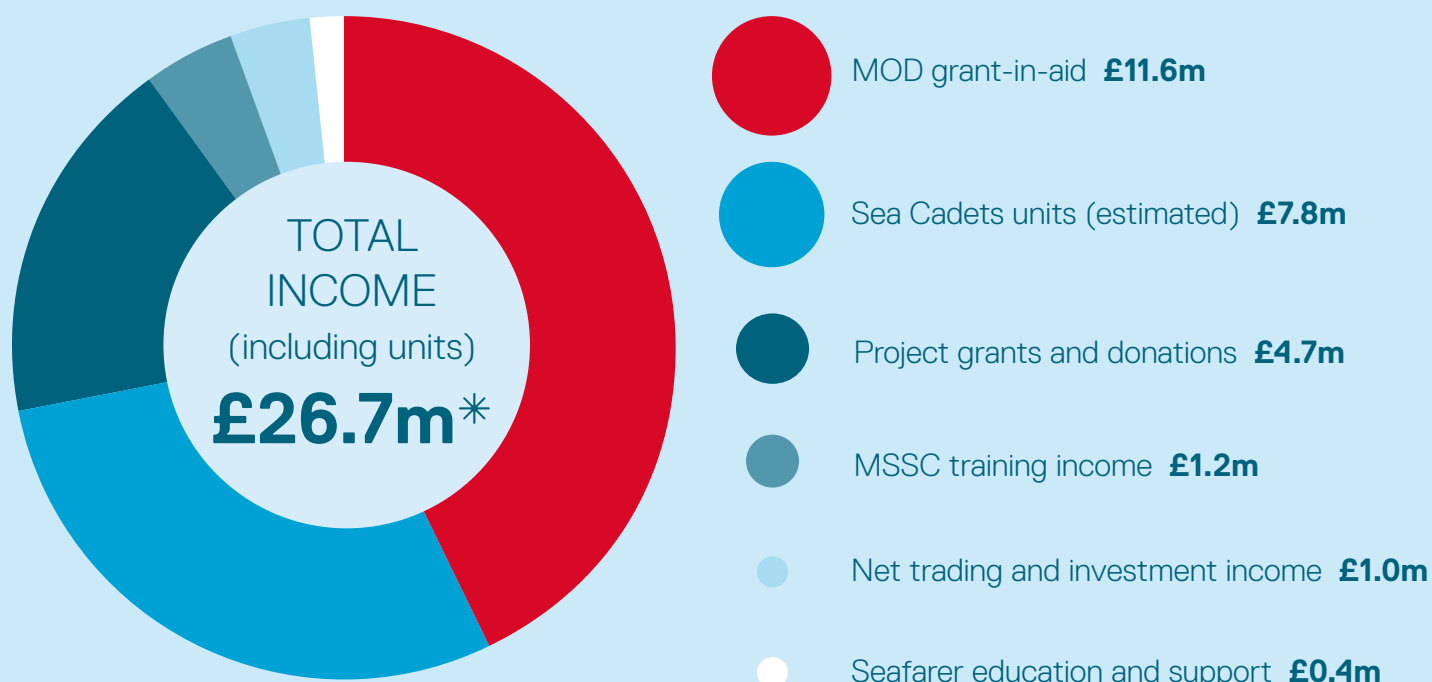
- Further Sea Cadets Portal enhancements implemented
- Midlands Boat Station operational
- Two adventure training centres delivered
- Four regional shooting hubs, 75 unit drill hubs and 72 air rifle centres delivered

£3m fundraising delivered:

- Launch of 'Friends of MSSC' programme
- Offshore, adventure training and bursary appeals launched



Financial review 2023/24



*estimated

1. Despite the temporary reduction in the fleet (p8-9), offshore costs remained in line with 2022/23 due to increases in bursaries and salaries.

Finances of Marine Society and Sea Cadets activities

Raising funds is vital for supporting our 384 Sea Cadets units, each of which is a charity in its own right. Including income generated by these independent units (based on the latest available results), total estimated income for the Marine Society & Sea Cadets' activities in 2023/24 was £26.7m. Total estimated expenditure on all activities in the year was £26.7m, with 94% of this expenditure going on Sea Cadets activity.

INCOME

Total income of the MSSC charity, excluding units, amounted to £18.9m (22/23: £16.5m), an increase of almost 15% on the previous year. Donations, legacies and other income grew by £3.1m, primarily due to a £2.1m donation towards our new Midlands Boat Station. Income from major grants grew by 90% and included £627k from the DCMS Uniformed Youth Investment Fund to support our Waiting List Project. The project aims to open 58 new sections in areas of relative deprivation, providing a total of 1,450 cadet places by March 2025.

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) grant-in-aid for Sea Cadets was £462k lower than in 2022/23 as major economic challenges impacted our Armed Forces and all government departments. This reduction was partially offset by other MOD grants totalling £431k. Our charity also continues to receive significant support in kind from the MOD, whose premises host Sea Cadets' stores, six area offices, three training centres, offshore offices and berthing, and ad hoc training activities.

MSSC was also provided with 11 Royal Navy personnel on loan from the MOD and we are hugely grateful to the Royal Navy for providing fuel for our offshore vessels, along with various uniforms and specialist stores items.

EXPENDITURE

Total expenditure was £18.7m (22/23: £18.8m) excluding units, as we continued to deliver a wide range of activities for a growing number of cadets and were impacted by the very significant cost inflation during the year. The cost of safeguarding and supporting Sea Cadets activity and infrastructure increased by £498k (5%), with the majority of this delivering the DCMS Waiting List Project described above. Sea Cadets' training costs decreased by £698k (13%), due to the necessary cuts in activities outlined on page 8.

BALANCE SHEETS AND RESERVES

Total net assets/reserves of the MSSC charity (excluding units) at 31 March 2024 were £37.4m (22/23: £36.3m). Of this, £15.35m (22/23: £13.2m) was comprised of tangible and intangible fixed assets – 33% of which was the offshore fleet – with the £2.15m increase mainly due to the expenditure on the Midlands Boat Station, offset by the depreciation charge.

Total funds at year-end included £16.5m (22/23: £15.7m) of restricted funds, along with £18.2m (22/23: £17.4m) in endowment funds invested to provide long-term income for the charity. There were also £1.2m (22/23: £1.8m) of designated funds for cadet outreach and boat station development.

After accounting for £0.6m (22/23: £0.6m) of fixed assets, this left unrestricted funds comprising free reserves of £0.8m (22/23: £0.9m).

MSSC does not retain MOD monies as part of its reserves. It remains the aspiration of the charity to increase its level of free reserves to safeguard its activities in the event of any shortfall in public funding. The former MSSC building and land at 202 Lambeth Road remained the property of the charity for the financial year though exchange occurred in September 2024.

THANK YOU

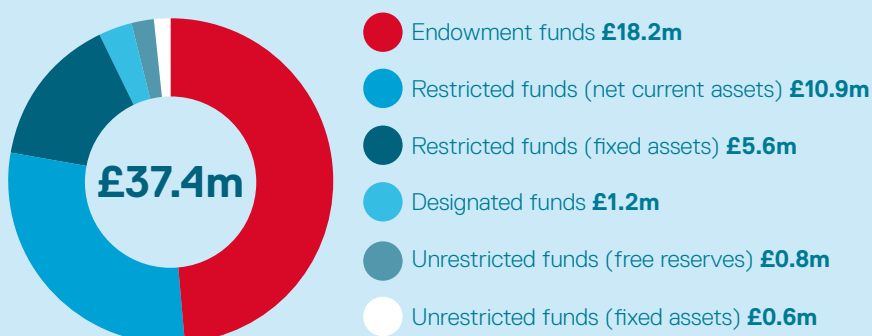
MSSC would like to thank the many unit chairs, treasurers and other committee members who, together with our cadets, instructional volunteers and our many supporters, raised an estimated:

£7.8m to support individual Sea Cadets units

We also remain sincerely grateful for the ongoing strong support provided by the MOD in helping to finance Sea Cadets, as well as our many other supporters, a number of whom are listed later in this review.

This financial review is intended to give an understanding of the overall summary financial position of MSSC for the 2023/24 financial year and is based upon the audited accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023. These are available to download from our website ms-sc.org or from the Director of Finance & Digital at the MSSC National Support Centre.

TOTAL NET ASSETS/RESERVES (FUNDS) INCLUDING UNITS



Thank you to all MSSC funders and supporters

A huge thank you to our donors, who have helped us to realise our vision of equipping children and young people to launch well into life.

Your donation means that no young person has to miss out on gaining the skills they need because they can't afford it.

STATUTORY FUNDERS

Ministry of Defence
Department for Culture,
Media & Sport

TRUSTS, FOUNDATIONS AND CORPORATES

The Association of
Sail Training Organisations
BAE Systems
Capita plc
The Corporation of Trinity House
The Denholm Group
The Gosling Foundation Limited
Greenwich Hospital
Groundwork UK
Honourable Company
of Master Mariners
Jack Petchey Foundation
Johnnie Johnson Trust
The Michael Uren Foundation
The Naval Club
The Seafarers' Charity
Social Investment
Business Foundation
Square Rigger Club Charity
Stelios Philanthropic Foundation
Worshipful Company of
Management Consultants
Worshipful Company of Shipwrights

INDIVIDUAL DONORS

Ms Joyce Beresford
Mr Charles Conrad Blakey



People, honours, commendations and committees

ADMIRAL OF THE SEA CADET CORPS

HRH The Princess Royal KG KT GCVO
GCStJ GSO CD

MSSC PRESIDENT

Admiral Sir Philip Jones GCB DL

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Ms Léonie Austin
(Vice Chair) – from 1 April 2024
Ms Christine Baldwin MRICS
Miss Laurelle Brant
Ms Liz Cassidy (Vice Chair) –
retired 31 March 2024
Mr John Denholm –
elected 11 October 2023
Mr David Derbyshire
Mr David Dingle CBE
Mr Simon Figgis – retired 31 March 2024
Mr Gareth Hampton
Mr Alan Marsh MBE FICS
Mr John May OBE DL
Captain Sir Ian McNaught KCVO MNM FNI –
retired 11 October 2023
Ms Lukshmy Miranda Nagalingam –
retired 27 June 2024
Ms Kirsten Naude –
elected 11 October 2023
Mr Jeremy Penn (Chair)
Mr Jonathan Robertshaw
Mr Michael Schofield
Mr Steven Smith OBE
Vice Admiral Sir Jonathan Woodcock KCB OBE

COMMITTEES

Finance, Investment, Remuneration & Audit
Committee (Chair: Simon Figgis)
Policy Development & Nominations
Committee (Chair: Léonie Austin)
Safety, Safeguarding, Inclusion &
Risk Committee (Chair: John May OBE DL)
National Sea Cadet Advisory Council
(Chair: Mr Steven Smith OBE)

VICE PRESIDENTS

Mr Tony Allen
Dr Louise Bennett
Vice Admiral Sir Tom Blackburn KCVO CB
Rear Admiral John Borley CB MA CEng MIEE
Ms Liz Cassidy – from 1 April 2024
Colonel Paul Cautley CMG OBE DL –
retired 11 October 2023
The Reverend Canon R J Christianson
Mr Mike J Cornish –
resigned 16 August 2024
Mr Michael Everard CBE



Mr Simon Figgis – from 1 April 2024
Dr Sheila Fitzpatrick MBE
Mr Andrew Given
Commodore Ian Gibb MBE FNI MRIN FRSA FRGS –
resigned 16 July 2024
The Rt Hon The Lord Greenway Bt
Rear Admiral Sir Jeremy
de Halpert KCVO CB FRIN
Mr Eric Hutchinson
Mr David Jeffcoat
Commander John McK Ludgate RD DL RNR
Mr Alex Marsh
Sir Alan Massey KCB CBE
Lord Jeffrey Mountevans
Captain Nigel Palmer OBE MNIM
Dame Mary Richardson DBE
Captain David M Robinson MBE EXC FNI FRSA
The Earl of Romney
Mr Clive I de Rougemont
Mr Richard Sayer
Rear Admiral David Snelson CB FNI
Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope GCB OBE DL
Sir David Steel KBE DL
Mr Patrick L M Stewart MBE LLB WS
Mr Christopher C Thornton
Mr Henry Thornton
Vice Admiral Sir Jonathan Tod KCB CBE
Commodore W Walworth CBE RFA MNM
Mr Colin Wilcox
Mr Robert Woods CBE

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT

Chief Executive:

Martin Coles CBE FRICS ACI Arb

Captain Sea Cadets:

Captain Neil Downing RN

Director of Finance & Digital and Company Secretary:

Jenny Howard

Director of Young People, Volunteer & Business Support:

Paul Wilkinson

Director of Sea Cadet Learning:

Heather Williams

Director of Fundraising & Communications:

Daniel McAllister

Director of Human Resources:

Petrina Brooker

Director of Maritime Training & Development:

Darrell Bate

THE KING'S NEW YEAR HONOURS 2024

British Empire Medal awarded to:

C/Sgt (SCC) John Daley BEM of Sheffield
Sea Cadets and Royal Marines Cadets,
Eastern Area, for voluntary service to
young people in Sheffield.

OTHER NATIONAL HONOURS 2023/24

The King's Award for Voluntary Service (KAVS) awarded to:

Maryport & Solway Sea Cadets,
North West Area, in recognition of
the outstanding impact of the group's
voluntary work in the local community.

Royal Voluntary Service Coronation Champion certificates awarded to:

S/Lt (SCC) Marlene Rhodes RNR,
Commanding Officer of Rickmansworth
& Watford Sea Cadets; Mrs Ruth Verner,
Chair of Ballymena Sea Cadets; and Mr
Jeremy Williams, Chair of Rhondda Sea
Cadets, in recognition of their exceptional
and unwavering commitment to
volunteering.

ROYAL NAVY COMMENDATIONS

Lt Col (SCC) James Sandilands RMR,
Senior Staff Officer RMC – for services to
Royal Marines Cadets

Produced by MSSC
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Marine Society & Sea Cadets, a charity registered
in England and Wales 313013 Scotland SCO37808

Admiral of the Sea Cadet Corps: HRH The Princess Royal KG KT GCVO GCSJ QSO CD
President of MSSC: Admiral Sir Philip Jones GCB DL

